

## REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant responds herein to the Office Action dated September 22, 2005.

Applicant's attorneys appreciate the Examiner's thorough search and examination of the present patent application.

Claims 1-15 are pending in this application. All claims were rejected.

Claims 1-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Specifically the Examiner objects to the use of the term "substantially". In response to the Examiner's comments, claim 1 was amended to change the phrases "substantially solid" to "solid", i.e., not ring shaped, and "substantially matching" to "substantially equal to". Claim 9 was amended to clarify that the word "retarding" modifies both characteristics of the material used in construction of the separators. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection under §112 is requested.

Claims 1-9, 11, and 13-15, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,827,596 to Powers, Jr. ("Powers"). Additionally, claims 10 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Powers.

The knob assembly in accordance with independent claim 1 includes a knob, a bezel, and "a first heat insulating separator located between the knob and the bezel" and "a second heat insulating separator located between the bezel and a cooking utensil to which the knob assembly is to be attached, the second heat insulating separator having a solid, non-open body and having an area size substantially equal to said predetermined area size of the metallic bezel." Powers fails to teach or suggest at least these elements recited in the claims of the present application.

Powers is directed to a cookware cover release valve. The Examiner identifies the flanged bushing 4 of Powers to be equivalent to the first heat insulating separator of the present invention, the escutcheon plate 5 to the bezel, and the gasket 6 to the second heat insulating separator.

First, the bushing 4 is located inside the plate 5 not between the knob 3 and the plate 5. That is contrary to the claimed requirement that the first heat insulating separator be located between the knob and the bezel as recited in claim 1. Moreover, the gasket 6 is ring shaped and has an open body for fittings around a circular flange in the bottom of the plate 5 not between the

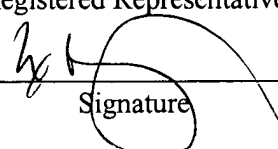
plate 5 and the cover 7. Because of its shape and the open body, the gasket 6 covers only a negligible percentage of the area of the plate 5. (FIGS. 1 and 2 and col. 2, lines 7-12 of Powers) The gasket 6 of Powers performs the opposite function from that of the claimed second heat insulating separator. As clearly seen from the FIGS. 1 and 2 of Powers, it is exactly because of the size and shape of the gasket 6 that the steam and therefore the heat is allowed to move from the opening 8 directly to the plate 5. It is essentially a heat carrier

The claimed second heat insulating separator has a solid, non-open body, and an area size substantially equal to the predetermined area size of the metallic bezel. It uses its non-open body and substantial equality of areas to insulate the bezel from the heat coming from the cooking utensil. It is a heat barrier.

Therefore, claim 1 clearly and easily distinguishes over the prior art of record. The remaining claims in the application are all dependent from claim 1, and include its limitations. Therefore, they too distinguish over the prior art of record.

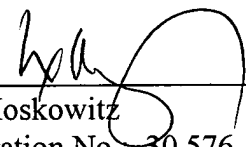
Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the application, allow the claims as amended and pass this case to issue.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450, on January 20, 2006:

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Respectfully submitted,

  
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